

Message Text

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ACTION FMC-04

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-11 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 COA-02 DLOS-07

SWF-02 L-03 AID-20 TRSE-00 OMB-01 DRC-01 /079 W

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 990

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

UNCLAS CALI 0169

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRN

SUBJ: PORT CONGESTION SURCHARGE

REF: STATE 072837

SUMMARY: STATISTICS PROVIDED BY EMPRESAS PUERTOS DE COLOMBIA DO NOT INDICATE ANY SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN TONNAGE PROCESSED THROUGH BUENAVENTURA FOR THE FIRST QUARTER 1973. WAITING TIME AT PORT THIS YEAR IS NIL. PORT CONGESTION IS ATTRIBUTED TO A LACK OF EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LOCAL LABOR FORCE AND NEED FOR IMPROVED ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTION. HANDLING OF COFFEE IS A SPECIAL PROBLEM DUE TO TRADITIONAL PEAK SHIPMENT PERIODS AND INADEQUATE RECEIVING SPACE. PORT IS IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT AS WELL AS DREDGING. END SUMMARY.

1. EMPRESAS PUERTOS DE COLOMBIA HAS PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING STATISTICS ON TOTAL TONNAGE (METRIC TONS) PROCESSED AT THE PORT OF BUENAVENTURA FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1973 COMPARED TO THE FIRST QUARTER OF 1974: FOR 1973 (JAN-MAR.) IMPORTS 153,507; EXPORTS 170,636. FOR 1974 (JAN-MAR.) IMPORTS 212,914; EXPORTS 124,535.

2. AS INDICATED ABOVE THE INCREASE OVER 1973 OF BUENAVENTURA'S UNCLASSIFIED

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FIRST QUARTER 1974 IMPORT TONNAGE WAS ALMOST COMPENSATED

BY DECLINE IN EXPORTS.

3. ACCORDING TO THE U.S. CONSULAR AGENT AT BUENAVENTURA, WAITING TIME AT ANCHOR THIS YEAR HAS BEEN PRACTICALLY NIL. DELAYS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED HAVE BEEN OCCASIONED BY PARTICULAR SHIPS AWAITING SPECIFIC COFFEE CONSIGNMENTS DESTINED TO DESIGNATED PORTS.

4. PORT CONGESTION, ACCORDING TO THE THE U.S. CONSULAR AGENT AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES, IS ATTRIBUTED PRIMARILY TO THE IN-EFFICIENCY AND INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE LOCAL LABOR FORCE AND INEFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE DIRECTION OF THE PORT. A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN INSUFFICIENT HANDLING EQUIPMENT INCLUDING E.G. A CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF WOODEN PALLETS WHICH COULD BE MANUFACTURED LOCALLY.

5. ALMOST THE ENTIRE COLOMBIAN COFFEE EXPORT IS ROUTED THROUGH BUENAVENTURA (ACCORDING TO A LOCAL SOURCE, EXPORTERS INSIST UPON USING BUENAVENTURA AS THE PORT'S HIGH HUMIDITY INCREASES THE GROSS WEIGHT OF THEIR COFFEE). PRESENT FACILITIES (TWO WAREHOUSES ACCOMODATING 250,000 BAGS) ARE NOT ADEQUATE DURING PEAK SHIPMENT PERIODS.

6. OF THE PORT'S 14 BERTHS ONLY 9 ARE IN GENERAL USEDUE TO SILTING. PRESENT DRAFT AT THE NINE BERTHS IS BETWEEN 24-26 FEET. THE SILTING PROBLEM COULD BE ALLEVIATED BY A ONE TIME DREDGING OPERATION.

COMMENT: THE IMPOSITION OF THE SURCHARGE IS ATTRIBUTED LOCALLY MORE TO INCREASED COSTS OF MARITIME OPERATIONS THAN TO CONGESTION PROBLEMS AT THE PORT. WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN AN ESTIMATE AS TO THE ANTICIPATED DURATION OF THE SURCHARGE.

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